

## Vin Decode Trailer users notes/tips

### **PART I : Tips for manually classifying trailers**

#### **Section 1: Using the VIN Structure**

**For basic understanding and decoding trailer vins:** Trailer vin structure (except for home-made trailers) is generally similar to other vehicle vin structures. Valid VINs have 17 “digits” (including letters).

1<sup>st</sup> 3 vin digits are World MFG. If 3<sup>rd</sup> digit is a 9, then the mfg. makes < 500vehicles/year and you must also refer to digits 12-14 to determine World MFG.

Digits 4 – 8 usually gives us information about the trailer type, model, length, axles. The most common breakdown, but by no means a certainty, is the breakdown below.

4<sup>th</sup> digit or 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> digits often indicate the type of trailer. Sometimes it is easy to id the trailer type by the 4<sup>th</sup> digit. For example: B=boat, D=dump, E=enclosed, C=enclosed, T=travel, C=camping, F=flatbed, FS =flatbed steel, U=utility, M=motorcycle, S=snowmobile. Sometimes the pattern isn’t noticeable without seeing many trailers from the same mfg. For example: 1<sup>st</sup> 3 digits for Jayco trailers are 1UJ. 4<sup>th</sup> digit A=camping trailer. 4<sup>th</sup> digit B=travel trailer. 4<sup>th</sup> digit C=fifth wheel.

6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> digits often indicate trailer length. Sometimes this includes the 4’ trailer hitch. If the light or gross weight for a boat, enclosed, or utility trailer appears incorrect from DMV, then you could type in trailer length in the program’s length field and select the Price As “Length” option to value the trailer by length. You should then put a check mark in lock information box so the length is saved for future years.

8<sup>th</sup> digit often indicates # of axles

10<sup>th</sup> digit indicates year. Same coding as other vehicles. Exception is vins for home-made type trailers that CT DMV assigned the vin for. These vins do not follow typical vin structure. There are 30 valid year code digits, so 2017 has the same year code as 1987.

#### **Section 2: Using vehicle weight**

The Vin Decode tables are designed for trailers with a weight capacity (gross weight minus light weight) less than 20,000lbs and a weight ratio (light weight divided by gross weight) of less than 40%. Trailers with weight ratio > 40% are often not standard trailers and are much more expensive than standard trailers and should be researched and manually priced. See paragraph below about examples of trailers with higher weight ratios. The exception to this 40% rule are horse trailers. The program has horse trailer tables with max 20,000lb capacity. As mentioned below, their weight ratio is often higher than 40%.

#### **Common Ratios for a test of reasonableness for different types of trailers:**

**Utility/Boat type trailers:** The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically runs about 20% (e.g. light weight 2,000 lbs. /gross weight 10,000lbs).

Exceptions are typically the very small utility trailers and home-made trailers often have a higher ratio but still do not have much value so I would still price them using the schedules in the program.

**Enclosed Trailers:** The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically runs between 30% - 40%.

**Camping Trailers:** The gross weight is typically < 4,000lbs. The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically is >50%.

**Travel Trailers:** The gross weight is typically 4,000lbs – 9,000lbs. The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically is >50%.

**Fifth Wheels:** The gross weight is typically > 9,000lbs. The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically is >50%.

**Dump Trailers:** We currently do not have a pricing schedule in Vin Decode tables for Dump Trailers. We are planning to add one for 2019GL. I have annually priced as utility trailer or Flatbed and added a 1.2 or 1.3 multiplier to try to get the value to reflect retail value.

**Horse Trailers:** The ratio of light weight to gross weight typically runs about 50%. Horse Trailers with length >20' often have living quarters, which substantially increases value and our tables would probably, therefore, value the trailer lower than the retail value.

**Examples of expensive vehicles <10,000lb GVW and weight ratio >67%:** bark blowers, boom lifts, hydro-seeders, screeners, wood chippers, stump grinders, light towers, air compressors, leaf machines, concrete pumps, message trailers, concrete mixers, food carts. See paragraph below for websites to assist in estimating values for these and other vehicles.

### Section 3: Reference websites

**Websites of trailers for sale when you need to estimate a value:** Machinerytrader.com, Truckpaper.com (trailer section), RockandDirt.com, italintl.com (amusement rides), www.enviro-group.com/tubgrinders, horsetrailerworld.com, Vermeerused.com .

### Section 4: How to quickly classify multiple similar trailers

**To identify and batch price trailers that the program was not able to identify:** Click on Settings, Valuation, and Batch Pricing. Then click on Specify type for unclassified trailers. You can sort by any column by clicking on any heading that is **BOLD**.

First sort by "**BODY**", then click on box in "Update?" column for each trailer body that says "boat". Then open window at top/right of screen that says "Type to specify" and select "Boat Trailer". A value should populate in each selected boat trailer. Please review for reasonableness and then click on "Commit". Depending which version of the program you are on, you may need to exit the program and go back in for change to show in main screen.

Go back into batch pricing and sort by **BODY** again and repeat the steps above for trailers you can identify as utility trailers, enclosed trailers, dump trailers, camping trailers, travel trailers ...

Only trailers with pricing schedules will be priced. You will get a message to continue for trailers with no pricing schedule. Click OK to commit those trailers as a specific Type, then you can later manually price each from the main screen when Batch identifying/pricing is complete.

Next sort by "**Light Wt.**". Most trailers <2,000lb gross weight are probably utility type trailers. Review their ratios for reasonableness, click "Update?" box for desired utility trailers, select Utility Trailer in window of Type to specify window in top/right of screen, click Commit.

Repeat process by sorting by each column heading to assist in identifying various trailer types as necessary.

When you have completed identifying as many trailers as you can utilizing Batch Pricing method, return to Main Screen (It may be best to exit program and then go back in). Select each trailer Type in the All Types window of Main screen and give a quick review of data/values for reasonableness for each trailer that was priced. Manually price trailers and trailer types that are unpriced. Make any notes in Permanent Notes field that would be useful in future years.

For camping, travel and 5<sup>th</sup> wheel trailers: sort by Brand so the trailer order is similar to NADA book.

Any trailers that you have not yet identified will be in blank section of the pull down window on the Main screen just above Boat trailer option. Double click on each trailer and try again to id it doing a Google search. If you decide to

price it using the Vin Decode tables, then select the appropriate Price As option on the right side of the screen. Then select the appropriate Depreciate As option. If you id the trailer Type, then type it in the Type field and click the Lock Information box at the bottom to save it for future years. To give assessors flexibility for trailers that may be better or inferior quality or to adjust a value to track to a BAA decision, we have a “Multiplier” field just below the “Price New” field.

If you decide to manually price some of these trailers, click on “Manual Value Entry option and type in the market value.

## **PART II : Requesting Information from Taxpayers : Generate Letters**

**Print Letters:** The program has separate letters for Class code 10 vehicles and Class code 11 vehicles.

Click on Print letters. Select Class code 10. Select years of most current vehicle years for the Grand List you are working on. For example: For 2017 supple, select 2016,2017,2018,2019. Make sure previous value 0 is checked. Our thinking here is that, as long as you included the previous year asmt for vehicles you imported, then this will allow you to only print letters for new vehicles that were not on your previous Grand List. Enter 2,000 in "Gross weight at least" box. Our thinking here is the very light trailers are often sold to owner and the owner puts it together at home so that sale is not a tradition retail transaction so no need to request a letter for it. Click Mail Merge. Save the file. Name the file. Select Class code 10 letter. Then click Edit Merge Document. When Word document pops up behind Vin Decode screen, click on Word document (do not minimize Vin Decode). Enter today's date. Change Town of West Hartford to your town. Put your name at the bottom. Save the Merge Mail. Then Print selected letters on your town letterhead.

Repeat steps for Class code 11 letters.

You can choose to price trailers by purchase price for letters returned to you. Select "Use Purchase Price" option, enter purchase price in "Price New" field, enter purchase date, and select a "depreciate as" option. We used Marshall Swift 20 year depreciation schedule with 82% max depreciation as basis for depreciation for most trailer types so it doesn't matter which option you select. The exceptions are A.) The horse trailer depreciation table is 16 year with 80% max depreciation. B.)Unknown table is same as PP code 16 depreciation table in case you wish to value some registered personal property (e.g. a leaf vacuum trailer) by purchase price and then depreciate it same as code 16. C.) M65 depreciation is same as M65 schedule.

## **PART III : Getting Data Into the Administrative Vendor's Database**

**Export Data for import into vendor's Admin system:** Click Export Data. Select your vendor in window at bottom of screen. Name and save your file. If Walsh is your vendor, you may need to change .XLS to .CSV. See for vendor's instructions for importing the file.

**Generic extract:** If you want a hard copy for you or your staff to review, then click Export Data. Select Generic in window at bottom of screen. Name and save your file.

## **PART IV : Additional Tips**

### **Other Vin Decode notes:**

There are **Green ?** on each screen to provide HELP. Click on ? on each screen for a better understanding of program.

Anytime you change trailer information on the left side of Vin Decode screen, put a check mark in the Lock Information box to save the information for future years.

**Caution:** If the vin # in the main screen is **red**, then it is an invalid vin #. Depending on which digit is invalid, the program could have correctly or incorrectly identified and priced the trailer. If the Vehicle Yr. is **red**, then the 10<sup>th</sup> digit code does not match the year DMV provided us for the vehicle. If both the vin and the Vehicle Yr. are **red**, then I would change the year to the same as year DMV provided us and click the lock Information box to save the change for future years.

